

Terms of Reference (ToR): Assessment of Social and Environmental Outcomes of JSC Microbank Crystal's Services

Project: “Sustainable transformation of the financial sectors of the countries Albania, Georgia, and Kosovo”

Background Information

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has commissioned German Sparkassenstiftung for International Cooperation (German Sparkassenstiftung) with the implementation of the project “Sustainable transformation of the financial sectors of the countries Albania, Georgia, and Kosovo”.

German Sparkassenstiftung aims to strengthen the economic participation of people in rural regions of project countries, in line with sustainable resource use, through adequate financial services and thus to contribute to improving life prospects in rural areas and to increasing resilience to external influences. Moreover, the project objective is to build and strengthen local capacities for inclusive and resilient financial systems, including the imparting of skills for the application of ESG principles, the enhancement of financial inclusion for SMEs and the population through the promotion of financial and entrepreneurial education, as well as the improvement of competence in the use of financial services.

The project thus targets the following results:

1. The capacity of selected partner financial institutions or financial associations to offer adequate services which support the sustainable transformation of financial systems has been strengthened.
2. The framework conditions for international environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards and their implementation have improved.
3. Measures promoting financial and entrepreneurial education, including environmental and social aspects, have improved the conditions for the target groups to participate in the financial and economic system.

Relevant partner organisations on the demand side (civil society or private companies) and on the supply side (financial institutions, microfinance institutions, credit cooperatives) are defined as the direct target group as they are multipliers for the intended project measures and hence the part of

achieving the project goal. Indirect target groups are people, especially young adults, and MSMEs, especially female entrepreneurs, in the rural regions.

Overview of Intended Research

Within the above-mentioned project, German Sparkassenstiftung Georgia office will support JSC Microbank Crystal, a partner financial institution in Georgia, in strengthening its capacity to assess social outcomes and translate the findings into improvements in its services and institutional practices. Pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two institutions, German Sparkassenstiftung Georgia will provide relevant support for a Social Impact Measurement (SIM) assessment, to be conducted by a research company selected through a competitive procurement process. This cooperation contributes to the project's objective of strengthening partner financial institutions' capacity to deliver services that advance financial inclusion, sustainable livelihoods and resilience.

Building on assessments undertaken in the past, this study will examine the contribution of Crystal's financial and non-financial services across six dimensions: access to finance, access to green financing products, business performance, loan product impact, household wellbeing, client protection, financial resilience, digital financial inclusion and community and local economic impact. The analysis will explore socioeconomic change through developments in livelihoods, economic opportunities and control over resources, with particular attention to gender differences, women's economic empowerment and barriers affecting small, medium and micro entrepreneurs.

In addition to assessing outcomes across these dimensions, the assessment should examine how outcomes vary by product type, original purpose of financing, lending methodology, delivery channel and access to complementary financial, digital and non-financial services. This should help identify how product design and delivery choices influence client outcomes.

Environmental considerations will be integrated across these dimensions, examining whether and how Crystal's services support the adoption of environmentally sustainable technologies and practices, more efficient use of energy and other resources, and greater resilience to climate-related shocks. The assessment will explore the associated implications for household expenditure, business performance and livelihood security, including differences in women's and men's access to, and benefits from, green finance. It will consider intended and unintended social and environmental outcomes, generating evidence to inform service development, strengthen client protection and integrate outcome measurement into Crystal's institutional planning and decision-making.

A separate group of women clients will be surveyed for better understanding of women clients' needs, challenges and opportunities.

Research objectives

The overall objective of the assessment is to evaluate the contribution of Crystal's financial and non-financial services to clients' socioeconomic wellbeing and environmental sustainability, and to generate actionable evidence for strengthening the institution's social and environmental performance.

The specific objectives are to:

1. **Assess and inclusion:** Examine the extent to which Crystal reaches small, medium and micro enterprises, the suitability of its services to their needs, and the barriers that constrain access to and effective use of financial and non-financial services.
2. **Examine business and livelihood outcomes:** Assess changes in business performance, employment, income generation and livelihood stability, and explore the contribution of Crystal's services to clients' economic opportunities and longer-term socioeconomic advancement.
3. **Assess household wellbeing:** Examine changes in clients' living conditions, ability to meet essential expenses, asset ownership and capacity to pursue household priorities, including education, healthcare and housing.
4. **Evaluate client protection:** Assess clients' understanding of product terms and costs, experiences of service delivery and complaint resolution, and exposure to repayment difficulties, financial stress or other adverse outcomes.
5. **Examine financial and climate resilience:** Assess clients' ability to manage unexpected expenses, income fluctuations and economic or climate-related shocks, and determine how Crystal's services support or constrain their capacity to cope, adapt and recover.
6. **Assess to digital financial inclusion and community and local economic impact.**
7. **Assess environmental practices and outcomes:** Examine whether and how Crystal's services facilitate access to green finance, adoption of environmentally sustainable technologies and practices, and more efficient use of energy and other resources. Assess associated implications for household expenditure, business performance and livelihood security, including potential adverse effects and gender differences.
8. **Identify drivers of change and differences across client groups:** Explore the factors that enable or constrain positive outcomes, distinguishing Crystal's contribution from other influences. Assess intended and unintended outcomes across relevant client segments and where methodologically feasible, analyse differences by gender, age, client profile,

loan/product type and purpose, lending methodology, tenure, delivery channel and access to complementary financial or non-financial services. Where feasible, the assessment should use like-for-like comparisons to distinguish differences associated with client characteristics from those associated with product and service design.

9. **Inform institutional improvement and ongoing measurement:** Develop prioritized recommendations for service and product development, client protection and inclusive green finance, and propose practical indicators and measurement arrangements to integrate social and environmental outcomes into Crystal's planning, monitoring and decision-making.
10. **Assess client satisfaction and willingness to recommend Crystal:** Measure clients' satisfaction with Crystal's products and services and their willingness to recommend Crystal to others using the Net Promoter Score (NPS). Analyse the results across relevant client segments and where feasible, by product type and service delivery channel, to identify factors associated with higher or lower client satisfaction and opportunities to improve the client experience.

Scope of work

The assessment shall examine the contribution of Crystal's financial and non-financial services to client outcomes across these core dimensions: access, business impact, household impact, client protection, resilience and agency. Across these dimensions, the assessment should consider how product characteristics and service delivery influence client outcomes, including product type and purpose, lending methodology, loan size where relevant, delivery channel, frequency and quality of client interaction and access to complementary financial or non-financial services.

Gender equality, socioeconomic transformation and environmental sustainability shall be integrated throughout the analysis, with particular attention to women's economic empowerment and the role of green finance.

The research shall cover relevant client groups, products and services across Crystal's areas of operation in Georgia, giving due consideration to agro clients, micro, SMEs, business and consumer loans/clients. The detailed coverage, client segmentation, indicators and research instruments shall be developed by the selected research provider in collaboration with German Sparkassenstiftung Georgia and Crystal during the inception phase.

The assessment shall be guided by the following overarching evaluation questions:

- To what extent do Crystal's services meet the needs of different client groups and improve access to appropriate financial and non-financial support?

- How do these services contribute to changes in business performance, livelihoods, household wellbeing and broader socioeconomic advancement?
- To what extent do clients experience fair treatment, suitable services and effective protection from adverse outcomes?
- How do Crystal's services influence clients' capacity to manage financial pressures and respond to economic and climate-related shocks?
- How do these services affect clients' agency and economic participation, particularly women's decision-making, control over resources and economic opportunities?
- To what extent do Crystal's services support environmentally sustainable investments and practices, and what social and economic outcomes are associated with these?
- How do outcomes differ across client groups, what factors explain these differences, and what opportunities exist to strengthen Crystal's contribution?
- What lessons can be drawn from the findings and, where comparability permits, from the previous assessment to inform service development and ongoing impact measurement?
- How do outcomes vary by product type and purpose, lending methodology, delivery channel, client profile and access to complementary financial or non-financial services, and what aspects of product design or service delivery appear to influence these outcomes?
- To what extent do clients perceive Crystal's financial and non-financial services as contributing to changes in their quality of life, financial resilience, confidence, economic opportunities and household decision-making?

Deliverables

The selected research company or the company together with the individual consultants/sociologists in cooperation with the Crystals' research team shall provide the following deliverables of at least 1,000 completed customer interviews:

1. Inception report and detailed work plan

An outline of the proposed research approach, including the evaluation framework, scope, sampling strategy, analytical methods, implementation schedule and quality assurance procedures. The report shall explain how gender, socioeconomic change and environmental considerations will be incorporated, and identify opportunities and limitations for comparison with the previous assessment.

2. **Research instruments and fieldwork protocol**

Survey questionnaires, interview or discussion guides, consent procedures and fieldwork guidance, revised following piloting. The detailed research questions and instruments shall be agreed with German Sparkassenstiftung Georgia and Crystal before data collection begins.

3. **Data and methodology package**

Cleaned and de-identified quantitative data, a codebook, anonymized qualitative findings and documentation of data collection and analysis. The package shall record the achieved sample, data quality checks and methodological limitations and enable the findings to be reviewed and reproduced, subject to confidentiality safeguards.

4. **Draft assessment report**

A report presenting findings across the agreed assessment dimensions, integrating gender, socioeconomic and environmental analysis. It shall address positive and adverse outcomes, differences across client groups, Crystal's contribution and relevant external influences, and include preliminary recommendations.

5. **Presentation and validation workshop**

A presentation of the principal findings and recommendations to German Sparkassenstiftung Georgia and Crystal, followed by a structured discussion to clarify findings and consider their operational implications. Feedback and its treatment in the final report shall be documented, while preserving the independence of the analysis.

6. **Final assessment report and executive summary**

A revised report incorporating agreed feedback, supported by a concise executive summary and presentation materials. Recommendations shall be prioritized and linked to the evidence, identifying implications for service development, client protection and inclusive and environmentally sustainable finance.

7. **Framework for ongoing outcome measurement**

A practical set of recommended indicators and measurement arrangements that Crystal can integrate into its monitoring and decision-making. This shall specify indicator definitions, data sources, collection frequency and proposed responsibilities, building on existing systems where feasible.

8. **The final report and presentation**

PPT in Georgian as well as in English, shall include Crystal's overall Net Promoter Score (NPS), its distribution across relevant client segments, products and service delivery channels and an analysis of the main factors influencing clients' willingness to recommend Crystal. Where comparable historical data are available, changes in NPS over time should also be reported, with any limitations in comparability clearly explained.

Submission dates, working languages and review arrangements shall be agreed during inception. Acceptance shall be based on the completeness, methodological quality and consistency of the deliverables with the agreed scope.

Minimum Eligibility and Service Provider Qualifications

Eligible applicants may be consulting firms, research organizations, consortia or teams of individual consultants with the combined expertise and operational capacity to undertake an independent assessment of Crystal's social and environmental outcomes in Georgia.

Required qualifications

Applicants shall demonstrate:

- **Relevant international experience:** At least five years of experience in social impact measurement, outcome assessment or sustainability assessment, supported by at least five completed assignments covering three or more countries in total. At least one assignment shall concern financial services, financial inclusion, microfinance or a closely related field.
- **EU sustainability framework expertise:** Practical experience applying EU sustainability reporting or sustainable finance frameworks in at least one completed assignment. Relevant experience may include application of the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), preparation for reporting under the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), or assessment against relevant EU Taxonomy requirements. Applicants shall identify the framework applied, their responsibilities and the outputs delivered.
- **Ability to support EU alignment:** The capacity to translate relevant EU sustainability concepts into practical research questions, indicators, analysis and recommendations. The proposed approach shall address stakeholder engagement, material impacts, risks and opportunities, with particular attention to ESRS S4 - Consumers and End-users, ESRS S3 - Affected Communities, and relevant environmental standards. Applicants shall explain the relevance of EU Taxonomy concepts to the assessment of green finance, where appropriate.
- **Qualified team:** A designated team leader with at least seven years of relevant professional experience and experience leading at least two comparable assignments. The team shall collectively demonstrate expertise in quantitative and qualitative research, gender analysis, client protection, environmental sustainability and EU sustainability frameworks.

- **Capacity to conduct research in Georgia:** Access to Georgian-speaking fieldwork personnel and sufficient understanding of Georgia's financial sector and socioeconomic context. This capacity may be provided through proposed team members or identified local partners.
- **Independence and ethical practice:** Disclosure of actual or potential conflicts of interest and appropriate procedures for informed consent, participant protection, confidentiality, data quality and secure data management.

Desired qualifications

In addition to the required qualifications, demonstrated experience with the following frameworks shall be assessed favourably:

- **Global Reporting Initiative (GRI):** Practical application of relevant GRI 400 series social standards, particularly those relevant to client protection, inclusion, gender equality and community outcomes.
- **IFC Performance Standards:** Experience applying Performance Standard 1- Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts, and, where relevant, Performance Standard 4 - Community Health, Safety, and Security.
- **Social Value International / SROI Framework:** Experience applying social value principles and calculating Social Return on Investment, including stakeholder involvement, outcome valuation, attribution and sensitivity analysis.
- **AccountAbility AA1000 Series:** Experience applying the principles of Inclusivity, Materiality, Responsiveness and Impact, together with familiarity with the AA1000 Assurance Standard (AA1000AS).
- **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Experience mapping institutional outcomes to relevant SDG targets and, where appropriate, official indicators, with a clear explanation of the basis and limitations of the mapping.

Greater breadth and depth of demonstrated experience across these frameworks shall receive additional consideration where it contributes to a coherent and feasible methodology. Experience with every framework is not required. Merely listing frameworks shall not attract additional credit, and complementary framework expertise shall not substitute for the required EU framework expertise.

Joint applications and supporting evidence

For consortia and teams of individual consultants, experience and technical qualifications may be demonstrated collectively. The five-year experience requirement shall be met by the lead organization

or, for teams of individual consultants, the designated team leader. Years of experience shall not be added together across members to meet this requirement.

References may include assignments completed by proposed team members under previous employment or contractual arrangements, provided their roles and contributions are clearly documented. The member providing EU framework expertise shall have a substantive role in methodology development, analysis and quality assurance.

Applicants shall submit:

- An organizational or joint team profile and CVs of key personnel.
- A reference table identifying relevant assignments, clients, countries, dates, frameworks applied, outputs delivered and the roles of proposed team members.
- Supporting evidence, such as report extracts, case studies or client references, subject to confidentiality restrictions.
- An allocation of responsibilities, confirmation of key personnel's availability and details of proposed local partners or subcontractors.

Required qualifications shall be assessed on a pass/fail basis. Technical scoring shall place primary emphasis on the quality of the proposed methodology and practical EU framework expertise, with additional credit for relevant experience across the desired frameworks.

Evaluation and selection criteria

Proposals shall be evaluated using a quality-and-cost approach, with a weighting of 60% for the technical proposal and 40% for the financial proposal. Firms, research organizations, consortia and teams of individual consultants shall be assessed against the same criteria.

Eligibility screening

Applicants shall first be assessed against the required qualifications set out in the preceding section on a pass/fail basis. Only applicants meeting all required qualifications shall proceed to technical evaluation.

Desired qualifications are not mandatory eligibility conditions. Their breadth, depth and relevance shall be considered during technical scoring.

Technical evaluation

Eligible proposals shall be scored against the following criteria:

Technical evaluation criterion	Maximum points
Understanding of the assignment and relevance to Crystal's services, clients and operating context	10
Quality and feasibility of the methodology, including sampling, quantitative and qualitative analysis, gender, client protection and environmental outcomes	30
Practical EU sustainability framework expertise and quality of the proposed approach to EU alignment	25
Relevant international experience, team qualifications and capacity to conduct research in Georgia	15
Demonstrated experience with complementary international frameworks	10
Work plan, quality assurance, ethical safeguards and delivery arrangements	10
Total technical score	100

Experience may be demonstrated through proposed team members' previous assignments, provided their contributions are documented. Naming frameworks without supporting evidence shall receive no points. Proposing a full SROI calculation or formal assurance shall not, by itself, attract additional credit.

Minimum technical threshold

Proposals must achieve:

- At least 70 out of 100 points overall; and
- At least 15 out of 25 points for EU sustainability framework expertise and alignment.

Only proposals meeting both thresholds shall proceed to financial evaluation.

Financial evaluation

Financial proposals shall provide a complete, itemised budget covering professional fees, fieldwork, travel, translation and all other costs necessary to deliver the assignment. VAT and other applicable taxes shall be identified separately and treated consistently in accordance with the procurement arrangements and any applicable exemption.

The lowest eligible evaluated price shall receive a financial score of 100. Other financial scores shall be calculated as follows:

Financial score = (Lowest eligible evaluated price ÷ Applicant's evaluated price) × 100

Final ranking and selection

The final combined score shall be calculated as follows:

Final score = (Technical score × 0.60) + (Financial score × 0.40)

The applicant with the highest combined score shall be ranked first for contract award, subject to verification of qualifications, references, personnel availability and successful contract finalization.

In the event of a tie, preference shall be given to the proposal with the higher technical score. If technical scores are also equal, preference shall be given to the proposal with the higher score for EU sustainability framework expertise and alignment.

Timeline and collaboration

The assignment shall be completed **tentatively within 16 weeks** of contract commencement. detailed timeline is subject to negotiation.

MILESTONE	SUGGESTED TIMING
Kick-off, document review and inception report	Weeks 1–2
Development, piloting and approval of research tools	Weeks 3–4

Fieldwork and quality assurance	Weeks 5–9
Data analysis and draft assessment report	Weeks 10–12
Findings presentation and validation workshop	Week 13
Final report, recommendations and measurement framework	Weeks 14–16

The service provider shall work closely with the German Sparkassenstiftung Georgia project team and designated Crystal representatives. The final work plan and contract period shall be agreed upon at inception.

Submission Guideline

All questions concerning the assignment to be directed to: info.georgia@sparkassenstiftung.de

As needed, interested candidates may also request a pre-proposal meeting.

Interested companies are requested to submit their proposals via email to info.georgia@sparkassenstiftung.de no later than 18:00 (Tbilisi time) on 16 November 2026.